proviso that the sum of x, y, and z satisfies $4.4 \leq x + y + z \leq 5.4$), characterized by having a sintered surface region and a bulk region covered with the surface region, the surface region and the bulk region differing in composition, and satisfying the condition of $a/b \geq 1.2$, letting a be the sum of the respective abundance ratios of atoms Ni, Co, and Mn in the surface region and letting b the sum of the respective abundance ratios of atoms Ni, Co, and Mn, and the surface region having an atom manganese Mn.

Claim 2. (Amended) A method of producing a hydrogen absorbing alloy for an alkaline storage battery characterized in that the first step of obtaining particles of a hydrogen absorbing alloy having a crystal structure of $CaCu_5$ type and represented by a composition formula $MmNi_xCo_yMn_zM_{1-Z}$ (in the formula, M is at least one element selected from aluminum Al and copper Cu, x is a composition ratio of nickel Ni and satisfies $3.0 \leq x \leq 5.2$, y is a composition ratio of cobalt Co and satisfies $0 \leq y \leq 1.2$, and z is a composition ratio of manganese Mn and satisfies $0.1 \leq z \leq 0.9$, with the proviso that the sum of x, y, and z satisfies $4.4 \leq x + y + z \leq 5.4$), the second step of treating said particles of the hydrogen absorbing alloy in an acid solution, and the third step of heat-treating and sintering the particles of the hydrogen absorbing alloy treated in the acid solution at a temperature of not more than the melting point of the particles of the hydrogen absorbing alloy in a hydrogen atmosphere are carried out, to produce the hydrogen absorbing alloy having a sintered surface region and a bulk region covered with the surface region and satisfying the condition of $a/b \geq 1.2$, letting a be the sum of the respective abundance ratios of atoms Ni, Co, and Mn in the surface region and letting b the sum of the respective abundance ratios of atoms Ni, Co, and Mn and the surface region having an atom manganese Mn.

Claim 4. (Amended) The method according to claim [3] 2, characterized in that in adding at least one of a nickel compound and a cobalt compound to the acid solution, the amount of the compound to be added is in the range of 0.3 to 5.0% by weight of the particles of the hydrogen absorbing alloy.

Please add the following new claims 8, 9 and 10:

--8. A hydrogen absorbing alloy for an alkaline storage battery having a crystal structure of a $CaCu_5$ type and represented by a composition formula $MmNi_xCo_yMn_zM_{1-z}$ (in the formula, M is at least one element selected from aluminum Al and copper Cu, x is a composition ratio of nickel Ni and satisfies $3.0 \leq x \leq 5.2$, y is a composition ratio of cobalt Co and satisfies $0 \leq y \leq 1.2$, and z is a composition ratio of manganese Mn and satisfies $0.1 \leq z \leq 0.9$, with the proviso that the sum of x, y, and z satisfies $4.4 \leq x + y + z \leq 5.4$), and having the melting point at more than 1100 °C, characterized by having a sintered surface region and a bulk region covered with the surface region, the surface region and the bulk region differing in composition, and satisfying the condition of a/b ≥ 1.21, letting a be the sum of the respective abundance ratios of atoms Ni, Co, and Mn in the surface region and letting b the sum of the respective abundance ratios of atoms Ni, Co, and Mn and the surface region having an atom manganese Mn.--

--9. A hydrogen absorbing alloy electrode for an alkaline storage battery, characterized in that a conductive core member is filled with the hydrogen absorbing alloy for an alkaline storage battery according to claim 8.--